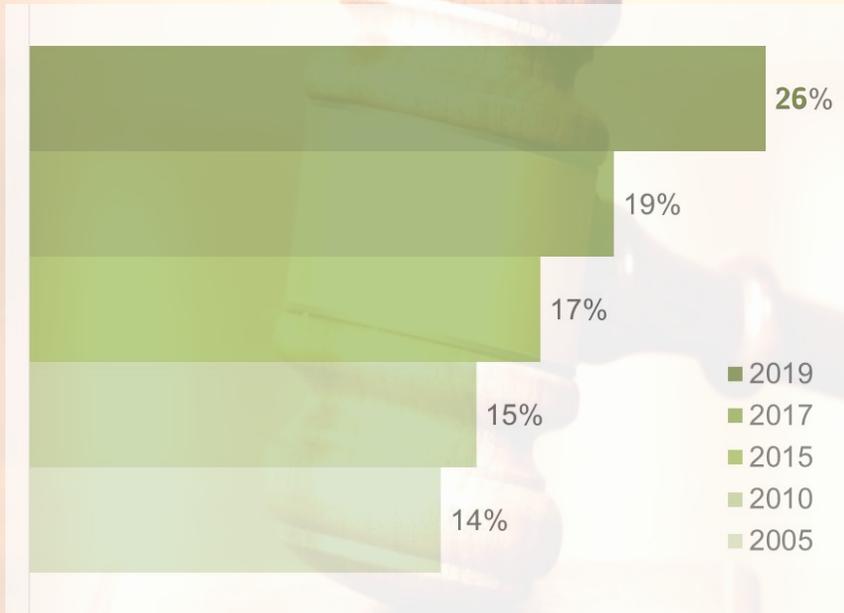


Women on the WI Circuit Court, 2019

Wisconsin Women's Council
December 2019



Women as a Percentage of Judicial Seats on the Wisconsin Circuit Court, 2005-2019



26%

The percentage of female judges on the Wisconsin Circuit Court increased from 19% in 2017 to 26% in 2019. This year-over-year increase puts *female* Circuit Court Judges among the state's fastest growing elected offices for women.

Even so, Wisconsin lags the national average of 33% for comparable state court systems (National Association of Women Judges).

43 Counties Have No Female Judges

Despite the higher percentage of judicial seats filled by women, 43 County Circuit Courts (62%), representing 81 judicial seats, have no female judges—down from 52 counties (73%) in 2015.

It is not until a County Circuit Court has 5 or more judges, that it is common to have a female judge. Among Courts with fewer than 5 judges, 75% do not have a female judge.

The Dane County Circuit Court is near parity, with women holding **47%** (8 of 17) of judicial seats. Milwaukee County is second highest at 43%.

County Circuit Courts with No Female Judges

Adams	Green	Pierce
Ashland	Green Lake	Polk
Bayfield	Iron	Portage
Buffalo/	Jefferson	Price
Pepin	Juneau	Richland
Calumet	Kewaunee	Rusk
Chippewa	Lafayette	Sawyer
Columbia	Langlade	St Croix
Dodge	Lincoln	Trempealeau
Door	Marinette	Vilas
Douglas	Marquette	Washburn
Dunn	Menominee/	Washington
Florence/	Shawano	Waushara
Forest	Monroe	Wood
Fond du Lac	Oconto	
Grant	Oneida	

Half of women on the Circuit Court are in counties with 10+ judges.

County	All Judges	Female Judges	Percent Female
Dane	17	8	47%
Milwaukee	47	20	43%
Waukesha	12	3	25%
Racine	10	2	20%
SubTotal	201	33 (of 64 total)	

**Women's "judicial firsts" are presented to the best of our knowledge. This history is not formally tracked by any agency or organization. "Firsts" were determined by consulting with government and professional organizations and other research. If you have additional or corrected information, please contact: womenscouncil@wi.gov.*

Trailblazers: Women's Judicial Firsts in the WI County/Circuit Court System*

Judge	Judge	Judge	Judge	Judge	Chief Judge	Judge	Chief Judge
Verle E. Sells	Rhoda House	Vel Phillips	Jacqueline Schellinger	Elsa C. Lámelas	Kitty K. Brennan	K. Kristy Yang Thao	Maxine A. White
Florence County	Menominee	Milwaukee County	Milwaukee County	Milwaukee County	First Judicial District	Milwaukee County	First Judicial District
1936	1943	1970	1992	1993	2005	2017	2019
County Judge	Native American Tribal judge	African American judge	Native American judge	Hispanic American judge	Chief Judge	Hmong American judge	African American Chief Judge

Since 2005, the Women's Council has tracked and published statistics, factsheets, and reports on women in state and local elected offices in Wisconsin.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Factsheets (available online at <https://womenscouncil.wi.gov>)

Women in the Wisconsin Legislature 2019

Women on County Boards 2019

Women in the Wisconsin Legislature 2017 (prior years available on request)

Women Roared in Office in the 1920s - a History of Women and Elected Office in Wisconsin

Why (More) Women Don't Run for Office

Women in the Judiciary 2017

Women in Local Government 2015

Women in the Wisconsin Legislature: Prior Experience in State & Local Elected Office

Moving Wisconsin Forward, 2015

An analysis of women in elected office in Wisconsin's state and local governments with updated statistics and 10-year trends.

Wisconsin Women's Political Firsts Timeline, 2015

Timeline of women in elected office in Wisconsin state government, including the first women elected to the Legislature (1925), first female Lieutenant Governor (2001), and first Latina elected to the Legislature (2011). Printed copies available by request (while supplies last).

Sources: Wisconsin Court System Circuit Court online database (https://www.wicourts.gov/contact/Circuit_Courts.html), as of December 2, 2019.; <https://www.nawj.org/statistics/2019-us-state-court-women-judges>, accessed 12/3/19. **Judicial Firsts.** Sells: <https://www.wisbar.org/aboutus/legalhistory/Documents/Pioneers-in-the-Law-The-First-150-Women.pdf>, pg. 57.; House: Dowling, Timothy C. (2005). *Personal Perspectives: World War II*, ABC-CLIO., pg. 256.; Phillips: <https://womeninwisconsin.org/vel-phillips/>; Schellinger: https://journaltimes.com/news/local/new-judge-fills-important-robe/article_77bf3de1-b096-5d42-a76a-b1fd7312c06b.html; Lamelas: Unpublished information, Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association; Brennan: "The Path to a Diverse Bench: Wisconsin Lags Behind, Judges Weigh In," *Inside Track*, Wisconsin Bar Association, April 2018.; Yang Thao: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/elections/2017/04/04/nations-second-hmong-american-judge-elected-milwaukee-county/100037470/>; White: Dutes, Sheldon (2019-02-21), "Maxine White is Milwaukee County's first African-American chief judge," 12WISN ABC news. Wikipedia, "List of first women lawyers and judges in Wisconsin," was a helpful starting point for further investigation.



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About Us

The Wisconsin Women's Council is the state's statutory commission on the status of women and girls. Founded in 1983, the 15-member Women's Council is appointed by the Offices of the Governor, Senate President, Senate Majority Leader and Assembly Speaker.

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